



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 July 2019

by J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/D/18/3218204

Frog Firle Barn, Whiteway, Alfriston, BN26 5TT

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Professor Farthing against the decision of South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref SDNP/18/04248/HOUS, dated 6 August 2018, was refused by notice dated 22 October 2018.
 - The development proposed is a Porch Extension to Dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a Porch Extension to Dwelling at Frog Firle Barn, Whiteway, Alfriston, BN26 5TT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref SDNP/18/04248/HOUS, dated 6 August 2018, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: L-01 Rev A, L-02, L-03 Rev C, L-04 Rev D.
 - 3) The materials used in the construction of the development hereby approved shall be as detailed within the permitted application particulars and shall be retained permanently as such, unless prior written consent is obtained from the Local Planning Authority to any variation.
 - 4) The glazing in the development hereby approved shall be formed of switchable electrochromic glass.

Procedural Matter

2. It has been brought to my attention that the South Downs National Park Local Plan 2014-2033 (SDLP) was adopted on 2 July 2019. The SDLP replaces all of the saved policies of the Wealden Local Plan. It is incumbent on me to take into account the most relevant and up to date information in reaching a decision and I have therefore dealt with the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of Frog Firle Barn, a non-designated heritage asset.

Reasons

4. Frog Firle Barn is an attractive brick and flint former agricultural barn, now converted into a dwelling. The Council consider the building to be a non-designated heritage asset, partly due to its proximity to several listed buildings.
5. Policy SD12 of the adopted South Downs National Park Local Plan (SDLP) states that development proposals will only be permitted where they conserve and enhance the historic environment. Furthermore, it states that development proposals which affect heritage assets (whether designated or non-designated) or their setting will be determined with regard to the significance of the asset, including the long-term conservation and enhancement of the asset. Policy SD5 of the SDLP also requires development proposals to respect local character through sensitive and high quality design that makes a positive contribution to the overall character and appearance of the area. The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (the Framework) at paragraph 197 states that in weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
6. The proposed porch would encompass the existing full height glazed entrance feature centrally located on the elevation. It would be a simple oak framed structure and would similarly be glazed to just above eaves height. The raised roof structure above the existing glazing would be largely unaltered by the proposal. The proposed porch would have a depth of 1.18m and a width of 3.45m.
7. The proposed porch would be relatively modest in size having regard to the overall width of Frog Firle Barn. The proposed porch would be of limited depth and would be a lightweight, transparent structure, comprising mainly of glazing with an oak frame and low level brick plinth. As such it would not be an unduly prominent feature and having regard to its scale, design and the use of appropriate materials, would not disrupt the linear form of the barn or significantly erode its original agricultural character and appearance. The existing full height glazing is already a domestic feature of the barn and the proposal porch would not significantly further its domestic appearance to a harmful extent. As such, the proposal, due to its design, siting and limited size and scale, would conserve and enhance the historic environment.
8. The proposal would not have a harmful effect the character and appearance of the Frog Firle Barn, a non-designated heritage asset. As such, the proposal complies with Policies SD5 and SD12 of the SDLP which seek to achieve high quality design and to ensure that development proposals conserve and enhance the historic environment. The proposal would not conflict with any of the statutory purposes of the National Park and would also comply with the Framework insofar as it seeks to ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and protect the historic and natural environment.

Other Matter

9. Alfriston Parish Council and the South Downs Society raised concern regarding the impact of the proposal on 'Dark Night Skies' aims. However, the appellant has specified that photochromatic glass would be used as a mitigation measure to prevent any impact on the 'dark night skies'. The Council suggest a condition to this effect, should be appeal be allowed.

Conditions

10. I have had regard to the conditions suggested by the Council. The approved plans condition is imposed for clarity. I have also imposed a condition relating to materials in order to ensure a satisfactory external appearance. A further condition controlling the glazing in the development is also necessary in order to comply with policies relating to Dark Night Skies.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

J Davis

INSPECTOR